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ABSTRACT

The College of Education at Northern Arizona University was organized along traditional lines with a dean, department chairs for curriculum and instruction, educational administration, etc. In the past decade the College had begun to isolate itself from other colleges and departments within the University. Also, programs of teacher preparation had become increasingly concerned with pedagogy at the expense of content knowledge. Under the leadership of the president of the University, the College has been completely restructured and, reflecting the new organizational philosophy, re-named "The Center for Excellence in Education." The faculty were informed that the school would return to the old normal school concept, but with broader responsibilities for integration of programming with all colleges and departments within the university. A team/matrix form of organizational structure replaced the traditional hierarchical structure to facilitate integration of educational programs with other disciplines within the university. Additionally, a set of field offices were established throughout the state to work closely with the public schools. A description is given of the way in which these changes were brought about. An organizational chart illustrates the present chain of duties and responsibilities of administrators and faculty. (JD)

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THE CREATION OF THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A case study presented to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Annual Meeting, February 28, 1985, Denver, Colorado.

The Center for Excellence in Education

A President's Vision

Northern Arizona University, with a current enrollment of 12,000 students, is the smallest of the three universities in the Arizona State University System. It was founded in 1899 as Northern Arizona Normal School. With deep roots in teacher preparation its College of Education has long enjoyed a reputation for producing high quality teachers for the State of Arizona. The College of Education was organized along traditional lines with a Dean, Department Chairs for Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Administration, etc.

In the past ten years or so the College had begun to isolate itself from other colleges and departments within the university. Also, programs of teacher preparation had become increasingly concerned with pedagogy at the expense of content knowledge. Nevertheless, the College continued to enjoy its statewide reputation.

In 1982 and 1983, at the national level, several reports were issued by private and public groups clearly indicating the need for reform in public education. The three most prominent reports were:

(1) A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform by the National Commission for Excellence in Education;

(2) Report on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy by the Twentieth Century Fund; and

(3) Action for Excellence by the Task Force for Economic Growth of the Education Commission of the States.

These reports concur on one major point--there must be substantial change in the present system of educating the nation's young people.

Arizona responded quickly and positively to the recommendations of the national reports. With the close of 1983, Governor Bruce Babbitt issued the final report of the Governor's Committee on Quality Education entitled Education in Arizona, Popular Concerns, Unpopular Choices. This report echoed the concerns expressed at the national level but with direct application to Arizona's educational system. Many concerns expressed in the report were aimed at Arizona's teacher training institutions. To further study the concerns with the education of teachers in the State of Arizona Governor Babbitt appointed a Task Force on Teacher Education. The Task Force began its work early in 1984.

Meanwhile, Eugene M. Hughes, President of Northern Arizona University, had quietly assessed the educational, political, and financial environment of the state. As early as October 1983, President Hughes, in his annual list of personal goals reported to the Arizona Board of Regents, indicated his intent to "continue to provide leadership in the development of Center of Excellence in . . . Teacher Education, to include elementary, secondary and administration." President Hughes serves as a member of the Arizona State Board of Education. The Board is influential in determining educational policy for the state. Additionally, he maintains close contact with members of the State Legislature and the Governor's office. Through these channels he was able to assess the degree of disaffection with teacher training institutions in the state.

FIGURE 2 Contingency Framework for Environmental Uncertainty and Organizational Structure. (Daft 5)

Environmental Change	Environmental Complexity: Simple	Environmental Complexity: Complex
Stable	LOW UNCERTAINTY Mechanistic Structure formal, centralized Few Departments No Integrating Roles Operational Orientation	LOW MODERATE UNCERTAINTY Mechanistic Structure formal, centralized Many Departments, Buffers Few Integrating Roles Some Planning
Unstable	HIGH MODERATE UNCERTAINTY Organic Structure informal, decentralized Few Departments Few Integrating Roles Planning Orientation	HIGH UNCERTAINTY Organic Structure informal, decentralized Many Departments, Differentiated Many Integrating Roles Extensive Planning, Forecasting

Early in 1984 the environment confronting the College of Education could be defined using Daft's terminology, as a "turbulent field" in which change was frequent and clustered requiring adaptation to survive. The environment was unstable and complex causing a high degree of uncertainty for the College. Under these conditions there was a need to restructure to a more organic, informal, decentralized form with capability for greater differentiation and integration of roles.

Daft (1), Emery and Trist (2), Mintzberg (3), and others define environmental contingencies as variables such as, the extent to which the environment is simple to complex, stable to unstable, differentiated to integrated, munificent to hostile, etc. They then suggest responses to these contingencies in terms of organizational restructuring. The following figures from Daft indicate this relationship of environmental contingencies to organizational structure.

FIGURE 1 Environmental Textures and Management Implications. (Daft 4)

CASUAL TEXTURE	CHARACTERISTICS	ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE
Placid, randomized	Changes are infrequent, and in single elements.	Concentrate on day-to-day operations. Little planning.
Placid, clustered	Changes are infrequent, but occur in clusters of linked elements.	Plan to forecast to anticipate and avoid clustered changes.
Disturbed, reactive	External elements react to changes in organization and vice versa. Organizations are large and visible.	Plan to forecast to anticipate moves and countermoves by other organizations.
Turbulent Field	Environmental domains change frequently and in clusters.	Interpret environment and adapt to survive.

In early February 1984 President Hughes called together a small team (three to four people) of administrators from the Office of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the College of Education to announce his intention to restructure the College of Education as the Center for Excellence in Education. Discussion that followed led to the vision of the Center as a unit encompassing the College of Education but with broader responsibilities for integration of programming with all colleges and departments within the university. Additionally, input from the private sector and the schools would be sought. The team was charged with the responsibility of preparing, over a weekend, a proposal to create the Center to be presented to the Arizona Board of Regents.

On February 15, 1984, President Hughes addressed the university faculty and announced his intention to create the Center for Excellence in Education and to seek additional funding of one million dollars above the budget then authorized for the College of Education. He also indicated, as did the proposal itself, that a team/matrix form of organizational structure would replace the traditional hierarchial structure to facilitate integration of educational programs with other disciplines in the university. Additionally, he described the formation of a set of field offices throughout the state to work closely with the public schools in a style similar to the original Agricultural Extension Service. Following the address to the university faculty President Hughes met with the College of Education faculty and explained the concept of the Center for Excellence in Education to them.

Northern Arizona University's proposal for the Center for Excellence in Education was approved by the Arizona Board of Regents on February 18, 1984 and the Arizona State Board of Education on February 27, 1984. The State Board of Education's approval also gave the Center exemption from all existing certification requirements for its graduates for a six-year period. This gave the Center considerable autonomy in specifying competencies for teachers in training.

Later in the spring, 1984, the Arizona Legislature funded the Center with an appropriation of one million dollars in addition to the three million dollar budget the university had previously secured for operating the College of Education.

How The University Responded

The February 15, 1984 university faculty meeting left faculty members in a state of shock. President Hughes had stated that the College of Education as we knew it would be disbanded as of June 30, 1984. The Center for Excellence in Education would be born July 1, 1984. President Hughes informed the faculty that we were returning to the old normal school concept that was the origin of NAU. The speed with which this transfer occurred was made possible because of a willingness of the Regents and the State Legislature to try a new approach to educational preparation programs. The formal committee structure was bypassed through a simple yet effective transfer system.

Dropping back to the approval of the Center concept by the Arizona Board of Regents and the State Board of Education, in late February, the mood was one of, "LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN MAKE IT WORK." Faculty and current college administrators had no feeling of ownership.

Faculty from other colleges did not know what a "RETURN TO A NORMAL SCHOOL CONCEPT" meant but they did know that they weren't too pleased with the sound of it. Only the trust in President Hughes, that was university-wide, held the faculty in a wait and see mode.

The Task Force of 33 was appointed on March 5, 1984. The Task Force was to be chaired by Dr. Whorton. Dr. Whorton, a College of Education faculty member, was an

Administrative Intern assigned to the Academic Vice President's office. Dr. Whorton had years of university service in representing faculty rights. He had served on the University Senate, was past Faculty President, a state lobbiest for the faculty, etc. Dr. Whorton was trusted by the university community and knew the college programs. The Task Force was made up of a representative cross-section of the university. The first meeting was held March 9, 1984. At that time the committee structure, chairmen, and committee members as well as a timeline were imposed on the Task Force.

The Task Force met once a week for seven weeks. Subcommittees met much more frequently. The committees presented recommendations and progress reports at each Task Force meeting and turf battles were fought. The Task Force committees presented their final reports April 19 and a Final Report Committee, composed of three College of Education faculty and three College of Arts and Science faculty members was appointed. Their "Report to Implement the Center for Excellence in Education" was presented to the Task Force and finalized April 30, 1984.

The Final Report, including supporting documents was 175+ pages. Its recommendations as to organization were adopted. The matrix organization was unique within the Northern Arizona University structure. Operational problems were foreseen and they did occur.

The Executive Director and Vice President, Dr. George Smith, was appointed, without a search, by President Hughes on April 15. It should be noted that with the establishment of the Vice President's position for the Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in Education, the role of the Director was greatly enhanced throughout the university.

Dr. Smith was Superintendent of Schools in The Mesa, Arizona School District. He has a long list of educational services including President of the State Department of Education Board, past President of the Arizona School Administrators, a member of the American Association of School Administrator's Board, etc. Dr. Smith recently was in the final four for appointment as the Secretary of Education.

The appointment of a Superintendent of Schools with no higher education experience raised the anxiety level of the Center for Excellence in Education faculty members as well as the university faculty. We were, as Dr. Whorton stated, in a TURBULENT FIELD.

Dr. Smith's appointment was followed by the appointment of Dr. David Williams, the Flagstaff Public Schools Superintendent as Assistant Executive Director. Dr. Williams was on leave from the district to spend a year on the Baylor University faculty. The Assistant Executive Director position has been upgraded to Associate Executive Director and is on the same administrative level as other college deans. No search was conducted but Dr. Williams' appointment was an interim appointment for one year. Dr. Williams resigned his Superintendent's position and is currently, I HOPE, a finalist for the permanent position of Associate Executive Director.

The four directors' positions were filled, without a search, with interim appointments. Three of the appointments came from the Center for Excellence in Education faculty and one, the Director of Research from the College of Arts and Sciences. The last appointments on the organizational chart followed the concept of faculty involvement in decision making. The department structure was abolished and area coordinators with one-quarter released time for administrative tasks were appointed. The Directors of Graduate and Undergraduate studies were given one-half released time from teaching duties.

The matrix organizational plan caused the Directors to make many false starts, encouraged territorial disputes, and above all forced the lines of communication to remain open. The Directors assumed their positions' responsibilities July 1. Dr. Smith was committed to the Mesa School District until October 15, 1984. He was able to spend an average of 1½ days a week on campus during the formation stage. Dr. Williams, the Assistant Executive Director, wielded the stick and carrot in molding the Center's programs and operations structure.

The summer of 1984 was hectic. It was decided that summer school would operate under the old structure and the Center Directors would assume program responsibilities in the fall. This led to an overextension of personnel. The Directors' summer duties are similar to the following. I was a department chairman, (the position would be abolished following summer school) Director of the doctoral committee, and taught two classes as my assignment. In addition I was responsible for establishing fall semester off-campus programs and organizing the office operations.

We survived and were operational in the fall. It has been a great experience. I wouldn't have missed it by choice but I would hate to put the organization through it again. It is a tribute to President Hughes, Dr. Smith, and Dr. Williams that we were able to take Dr. Wharton's matrix plan and have a viable operation within a university. The future is bright.

So What Happened?

The time is July 1, 1984. The stage is set—the preliminaries are complete, President Hughes' vision—the Center for Excellence in Education is a reality. The Task Force developed a road map to the future and the Center's initial leadership identified.

The 1984 Summer Session is in full swing. Plans for the Fall Semester must be completed, the new administration must prepare for and implement the transition from the College of Education to the Center for Excellence in Education in the next six weeks.

To permit the new leaders time to accomplish their task, the balance of the Summer Session was assigned to the then Acting Associate Dean of the College of Education, reporting directly to the Associate Executive Director of the Center.

Meeting daily, the four Division Directors and the Associate Executive Director began the task of operationalizing the concepts of the Center. The Center was easier to conceptualize than to operationalize. Three areas of concentration were identified for simultaneous development--(1) In-house developments, (2) On-campus developments, and (3) Off-campus developments.

In-House Development

Of major and immediate concern was the apparent feelings of uncertainty among the Center faculty. We attempted to keep in mind the old adage, "those who lead but have no followers only take a walk." We knew the faculty had to experience immediate and positive action in response to their concerns. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model and Herzberg's two-factor theory are reflected in the actions of the Center. (6)

A. Every available faculty member was given a personal (but structured) interview to identify concerns and to receive recommendations.

B. Faculty teaching loads were reduced from 12 to 9 hours.

C. Each faculty member was asked to identify and develop a Center related activity for the "three hour" reduction in teaching load.

(Flexibility was permitted in Center Activities for the Fall Semester. Some faculty members were more creative than others, some more confident than others, and some more cooperative than others.)

D. A 39-point staff development program was developed. An expert was brought to NAU for inservice and to stimulate faculty. A Blue Ribbon Lecture Series, under direction of a Center professor, was initiated to bring outstanding educators to campus. A Brown-Bag Symposium, also directed by a Center professor, was continued to encourage Center faculty to report their own research, writings, and projects. An in-house newsletter, THE INTERCOM, was revived. The faculty Mini-Grant Program was recusitated.

E. Committees were organized to (1) develop a faculty evaluation procedure for 1984-85 and (2) recommend a procedure consistent with the university's newly revised Conditions of Faculty Service document.

F. New copy equipment was purchased immediately (ditto machines were removed).

G. In-progress remodeling was opened for inspection to the faculty and faculty members (on a seniority basis) were asked to "lay claim" to the new offices. (We moved into the new offices in December.)

H. Telephones were made available to <u>all</u> faculty members.

On Campus Development

Efforts were also directed to implement the "Normal School" concept in school preparation programs. On campus lines of communications were revitalized and new lines were strung on "old" poles and new poles were erected.

A. The Associate Executive Director was appointed to the University Academic Council and to the Council of Academic Deans.

B. A University Liaison Committee, composed of representatives from each college/school and division on campus was established to coordinate specific request for Center cooperation.

C. The Dean of Continuing Education was appointed to the Center (cupboard) Cabinet.

D. The Center (Curriculum) Council was reduced in size but reorganized to include rotating members from four colleges.

E. The Center's Mini-Grant Program was opened to include professors from outside the Center faculty. (Three $500 mini-grants were awarded to "outsiders." In addition two science professors were commissioned by the Center to conduct a survey of math-science teacher needs for the Arizona Board of Regents.)

F. A professor from the College of Arts and Science was loaned to the Center to coordinate the development of the Bilingual-ESL programs and to recommend a delivery system to transport the programs statewide to assist school districts comply with Arizona's new bilingual education law.

G. A professor was also "borrowed" from the College of Design and Technology to develop and field-test a staff development program for community college faculty.

Off Campus Development

The third area of concentration centered on off-campus efforts to develop a statewide network of programs and support. Immediate efforts to move out into the state were initiated by the Directors of Educational Services and Field Based Programs. The results were phenomenal.

A. The Center's first statewide survey related to educational services produced 421 requests for assistance. Services have been provided in over 70 school districts since July 1.

B. Meetings were scheduled with school district administrators throughout the state.

C. Special attention was directed toward improved relations with the state's community colleges and the massive Navajo Indian Reservation.

D. Adjunct professor recruitment activities were intensified to identify quality personnel to assist in the delivery of off-campus classes. Retired university professors and administrators as well as practicing school administrators and master teachers have become an integral part of the Center faculty.

E. A State Advisory Committee composed of 41 educational, business, industrial and political leaders provides an active, vocal support group for the Center's statewide effort.

Signs of Success

The schedule has been every bit as difficult and complicated as it sounds. However Center efforts have produced significant results.

1. A special legislative funding proposal for 1985-86--"Frontiers in Educational Leadership and Scholarship"--of one-half million dollars is receiving very strong support.

2. The Center has submitted directly or cooperatively sponsored $11.75 million in grant proposals since July, 1984.

3. The Center faculty are deeply involved in a complete program/course review of all degree and certification requirements.

4. Fall 1984 student credit hours increased dramatically; Evening division 78.5%, off-campus 62.8%, on-campus regular programs 7.1%.
5. The Center currently operates doctoral programs in two off-campus locations (doctoral courses are taught by resident professors), Master's programs are available at eleven off-campus sites, and bachelor programs are in four off-campus locations.
6. Three Regional Offices are opened and staffed to date. One in the southwestern corner of the state in Yuma, one in the metropolitan Phoenix area and one in northeastern Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. In addition a cooperative agreement with the Show Low School District in the White Mountain area provides regional services to school districts in that area.
7. The Center publishes a quarterly journal, EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, designed to encourage public school personnel to share their experiences with others.
8. Faculty morale and support have improved significantly and continues to grow daily. This is exemplified through their willingness to volunteer, the hours spent above and beyond that expected, grant proposals, service projects, willingness to accept off-campus assignments, research and the initiation of special projects.

The concept of the Center is still evolving--difficulties arise, problems erupt, differences of opinion voiced, territorial discussions are frequent, and even a bit of confusion creeps in occasionally. But the system's structure provides appropriate avenues to resolve problems.

Initially the matrix structure was very difficult to implement. A two day retreat of the Division Directors and the Associate Executive Director became necessary to bring the

Center's mission, individual assignment of responsibilities, and the daily operations into the desired cooperative mode. Now with weekly director meetings, the open frank communications between directors and a genuine desire for success the Center is operating much more smoothly and efficiently. Faculty members are more comfortable and are functioning very effectively within the new structure. (Some faculty members are directly responsible to as many as three directors for projects, teaching, and research.)

Presently, as evidenced in the Chronicle of Higher Education, NAU is seeking to permanently fill the five interim administrative positions.

The Center concept is viable—"This Center does it better."

But you need:

An atmosphere ready and receptive to change.

A resilient faculty.

Administrative leadership not bounded by tradition.

Financial resources to permit immediate response to initial needs.

University-wide support and encouragement.

MOST IMPORTANT YOU MUST HAVE:

A President with vision and willing to take risks.

NOTES

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2. Emery, Fred E. and Eric R. Trist, "The Casual Texture of Organizational Environments," Human Relation. 18 (1965), 21-32.
3. Mintzberg, H., The Structuring of Organization, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey; Prentice Hall, 1972, 267-269.
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5. Op. Cit. Daft
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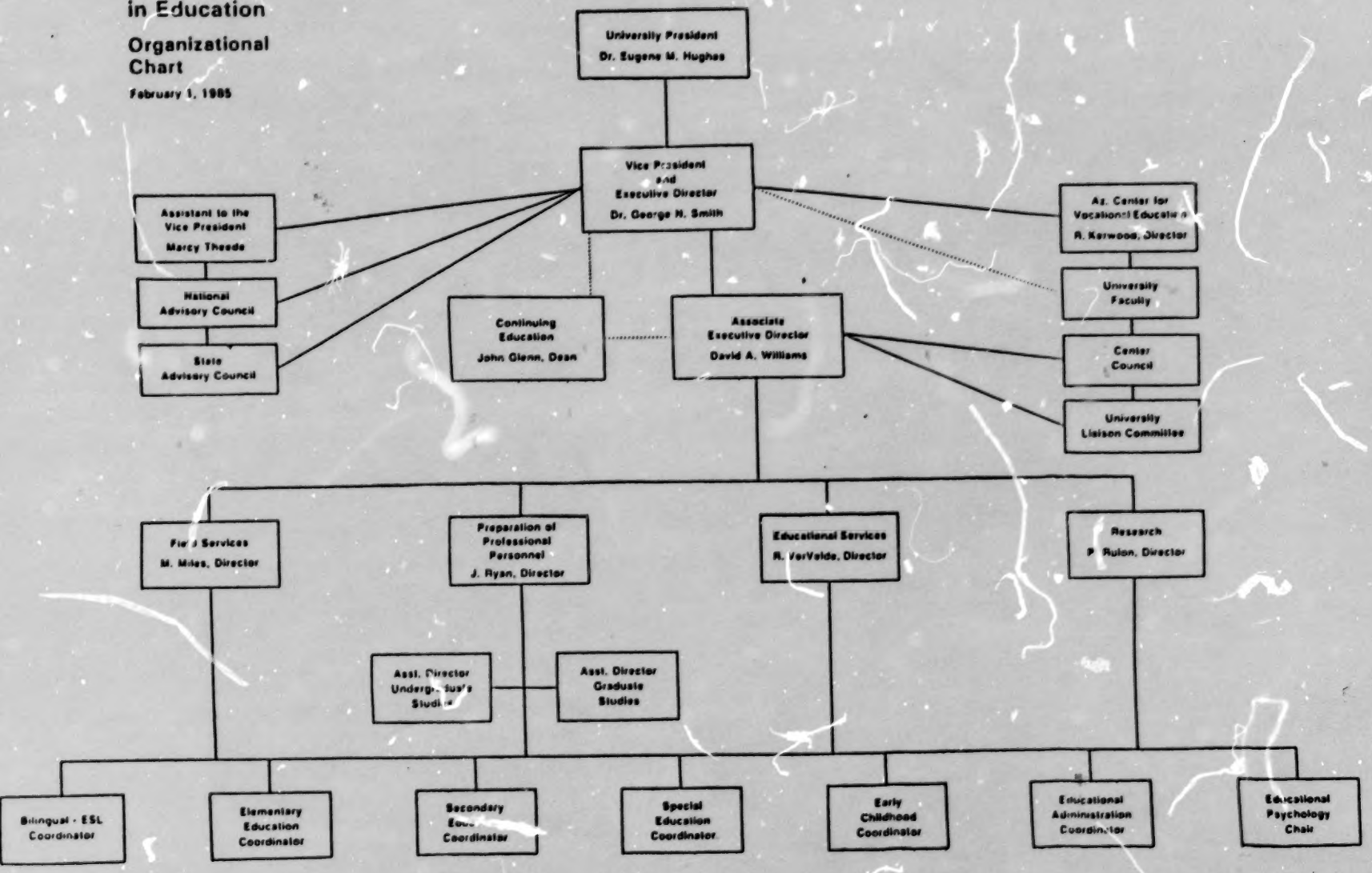
The Center for Excellence in Education

Organizational Chart

February 1, 1985



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